

American Studies, PhD

The Doctor of Philosophy program in American studies is not currently accepting new applicants.

Learning Outcomes

Students must demonstrate:

- comprehension of the history, values, and methods of interdisciplinary scholarship in the discipline of American studies, and for sport studies subprogram students, this involves a knowledge of the current and foundational theory and methods in critical sport studies, as well as of the contributions to sport studies to American studies and vice-versa;
- knowledge of the multiple forums that exist for the communication, implementation, and praxis of American studies scholarship in social and institutional contexts, especially where diversity, equity, and inclusion are guiding values;
- ability to articulate one's own values, intellectual commitments, and professional goals within and in relationship to the field;
- proficiency in advanced research and scholarly writing skills in the field;
- hands-on participation in university certificate programs, community-based projects and internships, or digital humanities projects, training in college teaching pedagogy where consistent with the student's individual development plan;
- proficiency at situating and interpreting American social and cultural materials historically, while grasping the diversity and distinctness of historical factors as economic, colonial, racializing, transnational, global, and/or linguistic;
- proficiency and experience in communicating American studies scholarship publicly in at least three professional contexts including conference presentations and/or conference organizing; exhibitions/installations; editorial or curatorial work; invited talks; public engagement or public humanities project; publications; or digital humanities project;
- proficiency in the conceptualization, communication, and organizational skills that are crucial to pedagogy at multiple levels of a university or college curriculum, and the creation of a teaching portfolio;
- knowledge of major movements and debates in critical theory and cultural studies, as well as the theoretical and methodological issues and debates in sport history (for sport studies subprogram students); and
- understanding of how historical method, critical theory, and cultural studies concepts are utilized in critical sport studies scholarship, and identifying sports studies' place within and contributions to the wider study of culture and power (for sport studies subprogram students).

Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy program in American studies requires a minimum of 72 s.h. of graduate credit. Students must maintain a program grade-point average of at least 3.00. They may focus on American studies or choose the sport studies subprogram.

Students work with their faculty advisor to map out a coherent plan of study that reflects their particular interests. Students are permitted considerable flexibility in constructing their study plan, but they must meet certain basic requirements, which include foundation courses, area foundation courses, two interdisciplinary fields of concentration, a research skills course, elective coursework, and a dissertation.

The two fields of concentration may be defined to correspond with a student's strongest intellectual interests, but they must be interdisciplinary in concept and multidisciplinary in scope. Each must include coursework from more than one of the university's departments and programs. The two concentration areas may, and usually should, have an intellectual relationship with each other.

Students are expected to address the cultural diversity of American life in their coursework and reading.

The PhD in American studies requires the following work. Some course requirements are different for American studies and sports studies.

Coursework

Required Foundation Course

All students complete the required foundation course and should take it as early as possible.

Course #	Title	Hours
AMST:5000	Interdisciplinary Research in American Cultures (taken twice in consecutive years for 3 s.h. each)	6

Area Foundation Courses

Course #	Title	Hours
American Studies Students		
	Two American studies graduate seminars	6
Sport Studies Students		
SPST:5002	Critical Theories and Cultural Studies	3
SPST:6074	Seminar in Sport History	3

First Field of Concentration

Course #	Title	Hours
American Studies Students		
	Courses in an interdisciplinary field with a historical concentration designed with the advisor and approved by the department's Plan of Study Committee	18
Sport Studies Students		
	Courses on sport in cultural and historical contexts selected with the advisor and approved by the department's Plan of Study Committee	18

Second Field of Concentration

Course #	Title	Hours
American Studies Students		
	Courses in an interdisciplinary field designed with the advisor and approved by the department's Plan of Study Committee	18
Sport Studies Students		

Courses in an interdisciplinary field designed with the advisor and approved by the department's Plan of Study Committee; may be a second field in sport studies or a field outside sport studies 18

Research Skills

All students take the following course.

Course #	Title	Hours
AMST:7085	Dissertation Writing Workshop (taken two or three times for 1 s.h. each)	2-3

Additional Requirements

All students take the following courses.

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these (to meet semester hours requirement to graduate):		
AMST:7090	PhD Thesis	arr.
Electives		

Admission to PhD Candidacy

Admission to PhD candidacy signifies that the department judges a doctoral student qualified to take the comprehensive examination. Doctoral students advance to PhD candidacy based on a review conducted during their second year in the PhD program (typically during fall semester); the review assesses a student's readiness to complete studies through the comprehensive examination and the dissertation, which is an original work of scholarship. In addition to judging a student's readiness for PhD candidacy, the review provides a progress report on the student's work and a tentative prognosis for future prospects in the field.

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination comprises three written exams and one oral exam.

The first exam is taken under the supervision of an American studies faculty member, who also chairs the comprehensive examination. The candidate takes a timed, take-home written exam of no less than four hours and no longer than two days. The exam details the candidate's approach to American studies (methods and models), including the student's position and critical engagement with models of American studies scholarship.

The remaining two written exams explore the candidate's major fields; these are at least four hours long and may be given on a take-home basis at the examiner's discretion.

The oral exam covers material from the written exams.

Dissertation

The final requirement for the PhD is the dissertation. A dissertation in American studies is a substantive work of scholarship that involves interdisciplinary research and analysis, and represents an original contribution to knowledge. In most cases, the dissertation takes the form of a book-length manuscript. However, students may propose alternatives to the traditional form, provided they have the dissertation committee's approval and complete a memorandum of understanding with the director of graduate studies in American studies. All dissertations must be approved by a committee of four faculty members, including at least two from the Department of American Studies.

Internships

Qualified graduate students in American studies can arrange internships with a number of local agencies, including the State Historical Society of Iowa, the Division of Historic Preservation, the University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art, the Iowa Humanities Board, Bruce Moore, the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, the Englert Theatre, and the Putnam Museum and Science Center. With special permission, candidates conducting research during on-the-job training may receive academic credit through AMST:7994 Independent Study. Other internships with social agencies, government, or businesses may also be arranged.

Admission

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

Career Advancement

American studies students' career goals are as varied as the topics they study. Graduates are well prepared for careers in a wide range of areas, such as business, education, arts and museum administration, government, journalism, or social services.

The program also provides a good foundation for further graduate studies in the humanities, the social sciences, theology, and business as well as for professional studies in law or medicine.

Academic Plans

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

American Studies, PhD

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
72 s.h. must be graduate level coursework; graduate transfer credits allowed upon approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on department website. ^a		
Students work with their faculty advisor to map out a plan of study that reflects their particular interests; needs to include foundation courses, area foundation courses, two interdisciplinary fields of concentration, a research skills course, elective coursework, and a dissertation. ^b		
		Hours
		0
First Year		
Fall		
AMST:5000	Interdisciplinary Research in American Cultures ^c	3
American Studies seminar course ^d		3
Field of Concentration course ^e		3
		Hours
		9

Spring			
American Studies seminar course ^d		3	
Field of Concentration course ^e		3	
Field of Concentration course ^f		3	
Hours		9	
Second Year			
Fall			
AMST:5000	Interdisciplinary Research in American Cultures ^c	3	
Field of Concentration course ^e		3	
Field of Concentration course ^f		3	
Hours		9	
Spring			
Field of Concentration course ^e		3	
Field of Concentration course ^e		3	
Field of Concentration course ^f		3	
Hours		9	
Third Year			
Fall			
Comprehensive Exam ^g			
Field of Concentration course ^e		3	
Field of Concentration course ^f		3	
Field of Concentration course ^f		3	
Hours		9	
Spring			
AMST:7085	Dissertation Writing Workshop ^h	1	
Field of Concentration course ^f		3	
Elective course ⁱ		3	
Hours		7	
Fourth Year			
Fall			
Prospectus Defense			
AMST:7085	Dissertation Writing Workshop ^h	1	
Elective course ⁱ		3	
Elective course ⁱ		3	
Hours		7	
Spring			
AMST:7085	Dissertation Writing Workshop ^h	1	
Elective course ⁱ		3	
Elective course ⁱ		3	
Hours		7	
Fifth Year			
Fall			
AMST:7090	PhD Thesis	3	
Hours		3	
Spring			
AMST:7090	PhD Thesis	3	
Final Exam ^j			
Hours		3	
Total Hours		72	

multidisciplinary in scope. Each must include coursework from more than one department and program. The two concentration areas may, and usually should, have an intellectual relationship with each other.

c Take twice in consecutive years.

d Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate seminars.

e Complete at least 18 s.h. in a first field of concentration; work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate coursework in an interdisciplinary field with a historical concentration.

f Complete at least 18 s.h. in a second field of concentration; work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate coursework in an interdisciplinary field.

g Consists of three written and one oral exam.

h Take two or three times (2-3 s.h. total).

i Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate elective coursework; includes AMST:7090.

j Dissertation defense.

a Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.

b The two fields of concentration may be defined to correspond with a student's strongest intellectual interests, but they must be interdisciplinary in concept and